

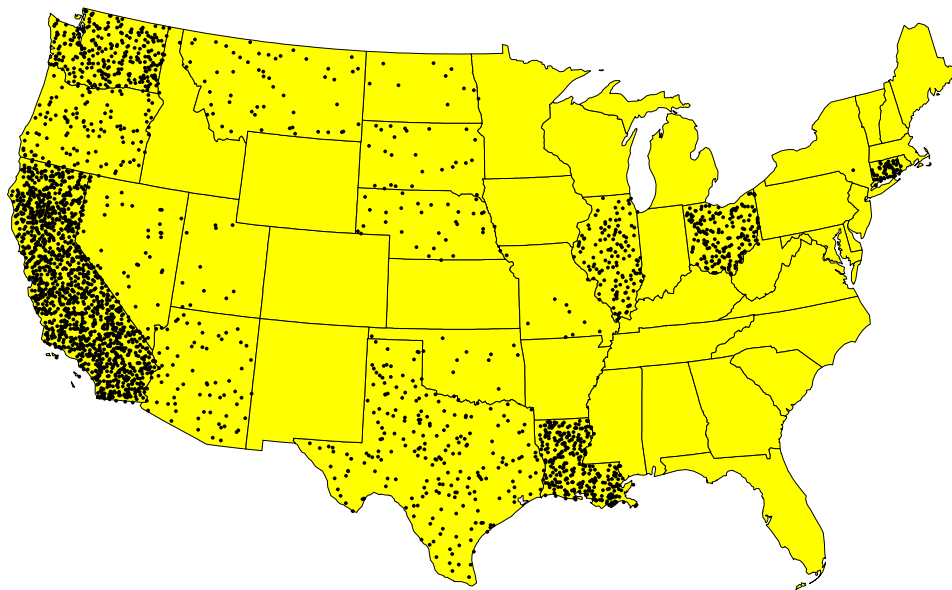
Clean Air and School Bus Safety Program Background (SB 698 – Poochigian)

Legislation makes replacing California's unsafe and unhealthy pre-1977 school buses a budget priority

"Getting dangerous school buses that don't meet today's standards off our roads will make our children safer and our air cleaner. California has one of the oldest school bus fleets in the nation. We must focus on replacing all of these hazardous and polluting vehicles once and for all."

Senator Chuck Poochigian

Pre-1977 School Buses in the Nation



One dot equals one Pre-1977 school bus

“Clean Air and School Bus Safety Program” Background

Information on California’s School Bus Fleet and Poochigian’s SB 698

Older School Buses Don’t Meet Safety or Air Quality Standards

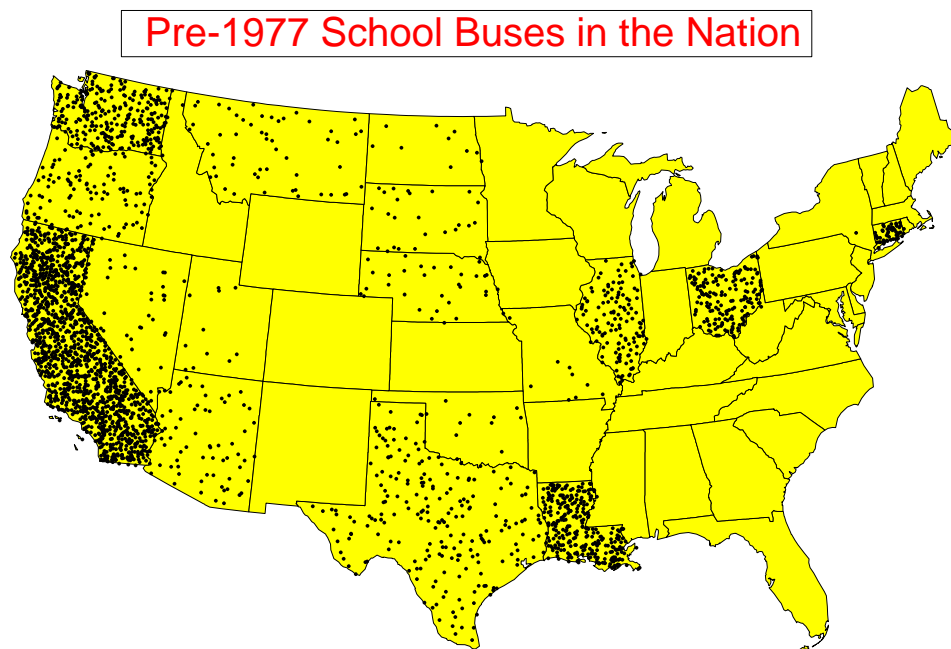
The federal Department of Transportation (DOT) estimates that 20% of California’s school children ride a bus to and from school each day. Yet California’s schools currently operate almost 5,000 school buses that violate federal structural safety standards, California air quality standards, or both.

Senator Poochigian’s (R-Fresno) “Clean Air and School Bus Safety Program,” as outlined in SB 698, will commit the state, to the extent funds are available, to appropriate \$50 million annually for the next five years to replace California’s most hazardous buses. The bill requires that all school buses manufactured before 1977 be replaced first, followed by all other school buses manufactured before 1987.

The year a particular school bus was manufactured is significant because of two historical events: 1) The adoption of federal school bus safety standards in 1977, and 2) California’s adoption of air quality emission standards in 1987. Thus, all school buses manufactured before 1987, unless they have been retrofitted, do not meet California air quality standards, and all school buses manufactured before 1977 meet neither California state air quality standards nor federal structural safety standards.

California Has Almost Half of the Nation’s Pre-1977 School Buses

California has one of the oldest school bus fleets in the nation. The average age of the fleet is 15.1 years. Approximately 995 school buses (or 6.3% of the fleet) were manufactured prior to April 1977 and do not meet federal safety standards. California has **48.5%** of the nation’s pre-1977 school buses. The following map shows the distribution of the pre-1977 school buses across the nation.



One dot equals one pre-1977 school bus

Pre-1977 School Buses Don't Meet Federal Safety Requirements

In 1977, the federal government established minimum safety requirements for school buses manufactured after that year. Specifically, school buses manufactured after 1977 differ from previously manufactured buses in that they are equipped with:

- ✓ **Special Passenger Crash Protection Equipment** – Items such as well-padded, high back, energy absorbing seats and body panels that are engineered to reduce the chance of injury caused by sharp edges.
- ✓ **Better Brakes** – Brakes that enable the school bus to stop in a shorter distance than other large vehicles.
- ✓ **Warning Lights** – Lights and reflective devices that indicate when the bus is loading and unloading students, and a stop arm that extends out to the left side of the bus to warn motorists when the bus is loading or unloading passengers.
- ✓ **Special Mirrors** – Additional mirrors that allow the driver to see all areas in front and along both sides of the school bus.
- ✓ **Emergency Exits** – Multiple emergency exits consistent with the capacity of the school bus.
- ✓ **Rollover Protection** – Protection that reduces the likelihood of a roof collapse and allows for operable emergency exits even after the roof is subject to extreme forces.
- ✓ **Fuel System Protection** – Protected fuel tanks and fuel pump, delivery system, emission control lines, and connections that protect against fuel spills in severe crashes.

With these safety measures in place, the DOT states that students are nearly ***eight times safer*** riding to school in a school bus than with their own parents and guardians in cars. Even so, the agency reports an average of 20 school bus related deaths and approximately 6,000 school bus related injuries each year. The federal government maintains that pre-1977 school buses that do not meet safety standards should be retired from use at the earliest possible time.

Older School Buses Are Unhealthy for Our Children

Older school buses emit higher levels of pollution than new buses and can have significant negative health effects on children. In its 2003 report, "Characterizing the Range of Children's Pollutant Exposure During School Bus Commutes," the California Air Resources Board found that one of the methods of exposure to air pollutants by children riding in school buses was due to the buses' own emissions. Specifically, the report stated that older school buses showed higher rates of self-pollution than newer buses.

According to the ARB, older pre-1977 school buses emit 60 to 70 times more smog-forming pollutants and hundred of times more toxic air contaminants than today's passenger cars. School buses manufactured before 1987 (31% of California's school bus fleet) were built with significantly less stringent emission standards than those in effect today.

California's Percentage of Old School Buses Too High

California schools operate over 15,000 buses. Almost 5,000 of these school buses were manufactured before 1987. Of those, almost 1,000 were manufactured before 1977, though some California schools are using school buses manufactured in 1955 (see adjacent table).

Years School Buses Were Manufactured	School Buses Currently in Use in CA	Percent of School Buses In Use
Pre-1977	995	6%
1977 to Pre-1987	3,974	25%
All Pre-1987	4,969	31%
Post-1987	10,869	69%
Grand Total	15,838	100%

Prior Replacement Programs Have Not Fully Upgraded School Bus Fleet

Recognizing the problem of having too many old school buses in our fleet, the Katz Safe School Bus and Clean Fuel Efficiency Program was created in 1988 to purchase school buses that met all applicable Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards. Additionally, the ARB's Lower Emission School Bus Program, created in 2000, uses a combined approach of replacing and retrofitting older, high-polluting school buses in an effort to reduce emissions.

The Legislature provided \$37.5 million in 2000-01 and \$12 million in 2001-02 for school bus replacement. Proposition 40 provided \$4 million for two years for school bus replacement. The fact that California has such a disproportionate amount of pre-1977 school buses that do not meet state or federal standards illustrates the fact that efforts to get these hazardous vehicles off of the road need to be increased.

Clean Air and School Bus Safety Program

The "Clean Air and School Bus Safety Program," established in SB 698 (Poochigian), would provide funding to take all pre-1977 school buses off of California roads. Rather than continuing the current drawn-out approach for replacing old buses that don't meet standards, SB 698 is meant to use existing state resources to get rid of our state's oldest school buses first, without placing an additional burden on local school districts.

It requires the State Controller, from 2006-07 through 2010-11 to annually transfer \$50 million from the Proposition 98 Reversion Account to the Clean Air and School Bus Safety Fund, to the extent funds are available. The bill directs the California Energy Commission (CEC) to allocate these funds to school districts in the following priority order: [1] replacing school buses manufactured before 1977; [2] after all pre-1977 buses are replaced, subsequent buses will be replaced based on [a] the earliest manufacture date, and [b] average daily mileage. The program requires local education agencies receiving these funds to purchase school buses that comply with federal and state safety and emissions standards.

Because SB 698 expressly forbids a replaced school bus from being used as a school bus, youth bus, school pupil activity bus, general public paratransit vehicle, or farm labor vehicle, this bill ensures that California's oldest polluting school buses are taken off the road completely. This provision eliminates the unfortunate circumstance where air quality and safety problems get shifted from one part of California to another.

VIEW SCHOOL BUS FACT SHEET ON THE NEXT PAGE

CALIFORNIA SCHOOL BUS FACTS



California school districts operate over **15,838 school buses**.



The average age of a California school bus is **15.1 years**.



There are approximately **995 California school buses (or 6.3% of the total fleet)** that were built before 1977 and do not meet federal safety standards.



California has **48.5 percent** of the nation's pre-1977 school buses.



California has approximately **4,969 school buses (31%)** that were built before 1987 and do not meet the Air Resources Board particulate standards.